

**September 11, 2009**

**Weekly Update: H1N1 – A New Kind of Flu – What You Need to Know!**

**Susanne Kufahl, Public Information Officer, Riley County-Manhattan Health Department**

2030 Tecumseh Road

Manhattan, Kansas 66502

785-776-4779 x 225

sk.rchealth@kansas.net

**Seasonal Flu: Don't Wait...Vaccinate!**

Seasonal flu vaccine is available to the general public at the health department during regular clinic hours beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>. You do not need an appointment. Flu shots are \$25 but no one will be refused for inability to pay. Seasonal flu shots are generally available at health providers across the community. In past years, you may have received a flu shot later in the fall, don't wait this year! You want to receive the flu shot before influenza activity is taking place in the community, and it is already here. The flu shot will provide protection throughout the duration of the flu season. It will not protect you against the H1N1 virus (swine flu).

**Who should get it?** Everyone over the age of 6 months who is not allergic to any component of vaccine.

**H1N1**

**Some good news:** Early test results strongly suggest that adults are immune to the H1N1 virus after just one shot of vaccine. Even though US trials of H1N1 vaccine are not yet completed, a representative of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) reports that the vaccine may go twice as far and start protecting twice as fast as expected. Direction from CDC and KDHE has been to plan on two doses 21 days apart. Of the 160,000 million US doses ordered, we are anticipating that Riley County will receive a little more than 30,000. If the US trials support the finding that only one dose is needed, that will be very good news for us all.

**Where and when will vaccine be available?** Kansas is one of 22 states with pre-registration for potential providers of the H1N1 vaccine. As of today, 18 providers have pre-registered in Riley County. The Riley County-Manhattan Health Department will contact all pre-registered potential providers regarding what vaccine allotment we will authorize for them. This determination will be based upon the guidance of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

We are expecting the first vaccine to arrive by early to mid October. We will offer H1N1 vaccine at the health department for identified high risk population groups Mondays – Thursdays from 4:00 – 5:30 PM and Fridays from 7:00 – 8:30 AM when we have vaccine. The health department will not be open for other services during these clinic times. We will have signs on our blue street sign (on Claflin), will alert the media, and have a message on our phone alerting people to the availability of H1N1 vaccine and who it is for. H1N1 vaccine will also be available at other community provider locations approved by the

health department, depending upon the amount and type of vaccine that we receive. We are told to expect the vaccine supply to be steady through November and to anticipate the possibility of school clinics in December.

**Who will be able to get the H1N1 vaccine?** Unless guidance from the ACIP and/or KDHE changes, vaccine will initially be available for persons who belong to these groups:

- \*pregnant women

- \*people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age

- \*health care and emergency medical services personnel in direct contact with persons likely to be infected

- \*children 6 months of age through 4 years of age, and

- \*children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions

**How serious is the H1N1 flu?** The primary impact we are expecting is for many people to be ill at the same time. This could have a large impact on businesses, employers, and schools, as well as for families. CDC and KDHE have recently released guidance statements for businesses and employers, for child care providers and will very soon release guidance regarding school clinics. Please check the KDHE website for this information at: [www.kdheks.gov/H1N1](http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1).

Two Kansans have died of H1N1 complications since late this summer, a child and an adult, both of whom are reported to have had underlying medical conditions. Nationwide, there have been 593 deaths and 9000 hospitalizations. The full impact of this flu is expected to arrive in waves over the next 2 years.

**How do I know if I have the H1N1 flu or seasonal flu or just a cold?** It doesn't really matter. The primary guideline is, if you have a fever stay home until you are fever-free, without the assistance of medication, for at least 24 hours. Generally, flu is more severe than a cold. As opposed to a cold, flu usually has a rapid onset (3-6 hours), causes a fever of at least 100 degrees, a non-productive cough, headache, and chest discomfort. Testing for H1N1 is not commonly done at this time and the rapid-test that may be used for it is not all that reliable. Generally healthy persons will probably not need to see their doctor if they get flu symptoms. Severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, confusion, or grey skin color require immediate medical attention. If you have a chronic health condition and become ill, seek medical guidance.

**Good Advice:** Everyone should stay home when they are sick, wash their hands often, and cover their mouth when they cough. Get vaccinated if you can. Send ill employees and students home and do not penalize them for absences. Prepare for the possibility of increased numbers of workers being absent and for the possible temporary closure of child care or school. Though school closure is considered a last resort, it is a good idea to plan for alternatives if any of these situations should occur.

For further information: <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU> or <http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1>